prior permission for renting out these portions of the building was taken, as no records are available on this particular matter. It is, however, submitted that IDSA and Children Films Society etc. have since vacated the portions of the premises occupied by them.

Lifting of sanctions by USA

1492. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that USA has lifted its sanctions against India for export of select equipment for civilian nuclear and space facilities in September, 2004;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the Indian projects expected to be benefit from the lifting of U.S. curb?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) U.S. sanctions in India, imposed in 1998 after the nuclear tests, were lifted in September 2001. However, U.S. Department of Commerce has an export control regime in place for "dual use" items. All items are listed in Commerce Control List (CCL) of Department of Commerce. There is no blanket restriction on items in this list to be exported to India. The export licenses are given on case-to-case basis.

(b) The completion of Phase One of Next Steps in Strategic Partnership (NSSP) was announced in a Joint Statement on 17 September 2004 during Foreign Secretary's visit to U.S., just before the PM's visit to USA. These efforts have enabled the US to make modifications to US export licensing policies that will foster cooperation in commercial space programms and permit certain exports to power plants at safeguarded nuclear facilities. ISRO Headquarters have been removed from the Department of Commerce Entity List.

(c) Indian Space programmes would benefit by removal of ISRO Headquarters from the DoC's Entity List and the removal of EAR99/XX999 license requirements for ISRO subsidiaries still on the Entity List. Department of Atomic Energy would benefit from the extension of the

"Balance of Plant" presumption of approval policy for safeguarded Indian facilities to include all non-NSG items. General Indian industry would benefit from more liberal and predictable U.S. policy on dual use technology export control.

Closing down of Visa Office by Singapore

1493. SHRI TARINI KANTA ROY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Singapore Government has decided to close its Visa Office in Kolkata; and

(b) If so, whether Government would take up the matter with Singapore Government to stop such a move?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) Yes.

(b) Government ascertained that the Visa Office was opened in 1987 on a temporary basis and closed in 2004. Upon enquiry; Singapore has conveyed that should the need for a permanent visa processing office in Kolkata arise in future, Singapore would certainly give it due consideration. Opening or closing of the Visa Office is the sovererign decision of Singapore.

Chinese help to defuse Indo-Pak tension

1494. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether China had helped India to defuse Indo-Pak tension two years back as appeared in media;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what is Government's policy of defusing the tension between India and Pakistan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) and (b) The Media reports referred to in this question are speculative and inaccurate. India's relations with Pakistan stand on their own and do not brook any third-party intervention.

(c) Government remains committed to establishment of peaceful, friendly and cooperative relations with Pakistan. Continuous efforts have been made